

Rev. C. Awdrey. After the ceremony, Mr. J. Naylor, of Leighton Hall, at whose expense the church is to be erected and endowed, entertained the Earl of Powis and a number of the clergy and gentry of the neighbourhood, together with his tenants, and about 500 of his workmen. The church, erecting after designs by Mr. Gee, architect, is to be in the Decorated English style; with broach tower and spire, and small octagonal chantry attached. All the dressings, groins, &c., are to be of white stone from the Miners Quarries, worked in with native blue flint (the latter in 3 to 6-inch courses). The main roof will be of English oak, and open; that of the chantry will form a pointed vault, broken into panels by arched and horizontal ribs, moulded. The following are the principal internal dimensions of the church:—Nave, 59 feet 10 inches by 21 feet; aisles, 52 feet 6 inches by 10 feet 6 inches; chancel, 20 feet by 15 feet; tower, 13 feet 6 inches square; chantry, 12 feet in diameter. Height of nave from floor to wall-plate, 27 feet; ditto of roof, from wall-plate to ridge-piece, 20 feet; total height of nave, 47 feet. Height of tower and spire, 130 feet. The church will be pewed to seat about 250 persons, as the congregation will consist, almost wholly, of the tenants on the Leighton estate. The aisles will be left open. A peal of six bells will be set up in the tower. A parsonage-house, in connection with the church, is also in course of erection. The builders are Messrs. J. and W. Walker, of Birkenhead.

Louth.—Sutton St. Mary's is to be restored. The bricked-up windows and patches of brick, it is to be hoped, as well as the present makeshift for a chancel window, will be replaced by suitable restorations.

Leeds.—St. Matthew's Church, Little London, was consecrated on Wednesday in last week. It consists of a nave, aisles, chancel, organ chapel at end of south aisle, vestry, and north-west tower. The latter, however, is only carried at present to the height of the ringing-loft, and a sum of about 400*l.* will be required to complete it. The style is Middle-pointed, or Decorated. The east window is of five, the west window of four lights; the side windows of two lights. The windows of the clerestory are spherically triangular, double foliated, with two orders of mouldings. The pulpit is of stone. The church is calculated to seat 700 persons. The cost of the building is estimated to have been about 2,400*l.* The architect was Mr. W. C. Burleigh.

Keyworth.—The old churchyard has been lowered below the level of the church floor, whereby the latter has been made drier and more comfortable than it has been for many years. The churchyard has also been extended by the removal of the old Free-school, and by the addition of a portion of a garden.

Christ Church, Kensington.—I have just seen your notice of our new church (Christ Church), and as one of its clergy beg to send you some more detailed information concerning it. The style is that of the Transitional Period, from Geometrical to Flowing. Mr. Ferrey is the architect, Meyers the builder. The ground plan consists of a chancel 30 feet long, nave, 60 feet, with aisles of equal length under separate gables. A tower and broach spire at the east end of the north aisle, of a total height of 120 feet, opens by an arch into the chancel and a north porch. The pillars are octagonal, with drop arches. The arcade is of five bays; the east window, of five lights, with a circle, containing six trefoiled triangles, is all filled with stained glass by Messrs. Powell; all the other windows in the church are filled with three-flowered quarries; the wood work is of the same style as the rest of the church; the chancel is filled with longitudinal stall-like benches for the choir, the organ being on the north side under the tower arch, and behind an oak parclose, as at St. Stephen's, Westminster. The pulpit is of stone; the altar-cloth was furnished by Mr. French, of Bolton. The organ is by Houldich, and is to have its front pipes diapered. The church is paved throughout with tile.

JOHN H. CARLISLE, M.A.

ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITIONS.

ALTHOUGH I hold the system of competition to be laudable in principle and excellent in theory, I freely admit that it has of late years become exceedingly vicious in practice, and fraught with glaring absurdities, as well as with grievous abuses. There are two points of view in which it has to be considered,—first, whether it be, when properly conducted, conducive to the interests of architecture itself; and, secondly, how it affects the profession. Now, it would stand to reason, that where there is a sincere desire to secure talent, and obtain the best design for an important building, such object is far more likely to be effected by eliciting the ideas of various architects than by confiding the work to any single one, be his general ability what it may. It is true, after all, the design chosen may be, if not actually the very worst, very far from being the best among those sent in. What then? Instead of proving the system itself to be erroneous, that only convicts the actual judges or choosers of incompetency for their office; and truly grievous as such mistakes are, it matters not a straw either to art or to the public, whether a wretched design has been selected from among those sent in to a competition, or was the production of some especially commissioned individual.

For condemning the system of competition *in toto*, there would be ample reason, could it be shown that its results have invariably turned out unsatisfactory; and *vice versa*, that where it has not been resorted to, but the work put at once into the hands of some individual, to do the best he can with it, security has stimulated him more than emulation would have done, and urged him on to his utmost exertions, and these most successful ones.

That competition sometimes answers its professed end must, I think, be admitted. The Houses of Parliament, the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, and St. George's Hall, Liverpool, may be adduced as instances which go far towards showing the advantages of the system. It will, perhaps, be said, that they are only exceptional cases, and therefore tell nothing against its general objectionableness. Admitting that they must be taken as exceptions, the reason of their being such is, that the competitions for these buildings were more judiciously conducted, and with greater good faith and integrity of purpose, than in the great majority of instances. So, then, I fairly grant that competition does work ill in the main: certainly, but then I contend that it does so not on account of aught radically defective or injurious in its abstract principle, but because such concorsi are for the greater part so flagrantly ill-managed, without any competency for their office on the part of the judges—or rather, deciders,—and sometimes without the slightest regard either to decency or common honesty. I could point out more than one instance in which a competition of more than ordinary importance has been so conducted as to convict those who had the conducting of it, either of arrant blockheadism or arrant knavery. On two occasions of the kind, I was greatly in hope that the enormity of the outrage would stir up the competitors, and indeed the whole profession, to utter their solemn and public protest against it. But, oh dear! no: that was not to be thought of for a single moment: spirited it might have been, but it would have been shockingly indecorous, and, what is worse, terribly indiscreet: besides, the mischief was done, consequently exposure, remonstrances, and protests would be to no purpose. Silly and short-sighted mortals! Why, there is nothing so effectual as what Carlyle calls “making a row about things;” and had you but had sufficient *nerve* or nerve to get up and keep up a good “row” on one or two excellent opportunities for so doing, you might have brought committees down upon their knees in the dust, and have made them sing out “*Pecorimus*” in full chorus; after which, future committees would have learnt—if not honesty,—prudence, and decency, and discretion, from their disgrace.

Could nothing else be urged in favour of competition, it would be no small recommendation

of it that it tends to break up monopoly, which is surely a desideratum, it being undeniable that ere now a single individual or one or two individuals have in a manner monopolised the greater part, the most important opportunities that have occurred in the course of their career, although they themselves have been far from worthy representatives of the architectural talent which it is to be hoped exists in the profession. Well, Mr. Editor, don't be alarmed: I am not going to mention names: I allude only to “X. Y. Z.”; so if any leash of gentlemen should fancy that it is they who are meant I cannot help it, nor you either.

There would be good reason for denouncing competition as erroneous in principle and at variance with the real interests of the art, could it be shown not only that architectural competitions have invariably given us inferior works, but that whenever a work has been entirely confided to some one appointed individual, the talent displayed in it has always been most satisfactorily commensurate with the importance of the purpose and the occasion. If any shortcomings can be found—and it does not require to be actually lynx-eyed in order to discern them—in Buckingham Palace, the National Gallery, the British Museum, *cum pluribus aliis*, at any rate, they cannot be attributed to competition; wherefore it would seem that no-competition frequently, or indeed quite as often, works just as bad for art as competition itself does. Committees are, it is true, not always composed of Solomons; but noodleism is noodleism, and if it be indicted upon us, the “by whom” is matter of almost perfect indifference. Nor is it managing committees alone that, either through ignorance or favouritism, commit works of more than ordinary magnitude to tasteless and incompetent architects.

I freely grant, however, that the present practice, as competitions are now managed, or rather mismanaged, calls loudly for reform—no doubt, a difficult matter to achieve, not therefore an impossible one; and towards accomplishing it one grand pre-requisite is, firm determination. Victories, as Napoleon observed, are not gained by shedding rose water; neither are inveterate abuses to be put down without making a manful struggle against them. Where there is a will there is generally a way; and I could point out a way that would go far towards considerably checking, if not entirely removing, the most serious evils and hardships now felt and complained of, and at once put an end to all those paltry ten-pound and other mock competitions. At the end of a long letter I cannot enter into explanation, so all that I will now say is that a member of the House of Peers occupies the president's chair in the Institution of British Architects. *Verbum sat.* ZETA.

A THEORY OF THE CONVEYANCE OF SOUND.

WHILE investigating the laws of nature which govern the draft of air and of smoke, by means of which a perfect ventilation may be obtained, and the smoke nuisance in every place entirely done away with, it very forcibly struck me, that there exist at present some totally erroneous theories respecting the conveyance of sound, and I shall be happy if you will give my new notions to the scientific world through your excellent medium, THE BUILDER.

The conveyance of sound in the air has very properly been compared to the ring caused on the water by throwing in a stone: the comparison, however, has, in a manner, been carried too far, or too short, just as you please. For, it must be observed, that the ring is caused almost only, if not entirely, on the surface of the water, becoming less, if not ceasing altogether, the deeper the stone sinks into it, owing to the resistance to the ring by the surrounding water, a resistance which it does not meet with on the smooth surface.

Now, it is just the same with the air: sound, like the ring on the water, is conveyed best and farthest where the air presents the smoothest and most uninterrupted surface; whilst within the body of the air it meets